

IE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



Matt Zlatunich

Despite having an area set aside for their protection, Snowy Plovers continue to be disturbed by pedestrians, joggers, and dogs at Crissy Field.

Snowy Plovers Continue to Decline at Crissy Field

As recreational use of San Francisco's Crissy Field increases, the population of Western Snowy Plovers that over-winters at the Crissy Field Wildlife Protection Area (WPA) appears to be in decline, according to the 2008-09 annual report *Western Snowy Plover Monitoring at the Crissy Field Wildlife Protection Area*.

The report is based on observations and documentation by GGA's San Francisco Conservation Committee. Since 2005, GGA volunteers have monitored the Western Snowy Plovers that arrive at the WPA sometime in July after their breeding season has concluded and stay until the following March. This season, the monitoring team carried out 20 surveys from November 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009, as well as active searches during the pre-survey and post-survey periods, collecting data on the presence of plovers and other birds and recreational uses by the public.

Despite the fact that the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's interim leash laws require all dogs to be on leash from July 1 through May 15 of the following year, dogs continue to disturb the birds. The U.S. Park Police and National Park Service rangers have increased the issuance of warnings and citations and are developing a database of area dog walkers. Hopefully, with increased education and enforcement of existing leash laws, the WPA may be made safer for the Western Snowy Plovers and other bird life that inhabit the beach area.

SNOWY PLOVERS continued on page 5

Report Analyzes Oil Spill Surveys

When the container ship *M/V Cosco Busan* struck the San Francisco Bay Bridge on November 7, 2007, Golden Gate Audubon volunteers and staff quickly mobilized to survey Bay Area beaches for oiled birds and contribute to the response effort (see *The Gull*, Jan-Feb 2008). ESA Associates, Inc. recently released a report summarizing and analyzing our survey data and offering recommendations to improve our response efforts during future spills.

According to the report, GGA volunteers recorded at least 2,207 oiled birds and 102 dead birds, comprised of 70 different species and/or groups of species, including 515 scaup, 324 Surf Scoters, 296 Western Gulls, 135 Western Grebes, and 91 Eared or Horned Grebes. Observers also recorded least 11 oiled Western Snowy Plovers, 8 oiled California Brown Pelicans, and 7 oiled Long-Billed Curlews.

Approximately 60% of all oiled birds observed by our surveyors were diving birds, 25% were gulls, 12% were waders, and 3% were dabbling ducks. The report concludes that this is consistent with other studies that have demonstrated that along the California coast, diving birds and gulls tend to be most susceptible to exposure to oil.

In February 2008, the California Department of Fish and Game reported that 2,940 live and dead oiled birds were collected during the

OIL SPILL SURVEYS continued on page 12



INSIDE

- 3** Plovers Online
- 5** Build a Nest Box
- 11** Make Your Vote Count

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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An Invitation To Get Involved

Golden Gate Audubon is a great place to be this summer, and I am thrilled to be here.

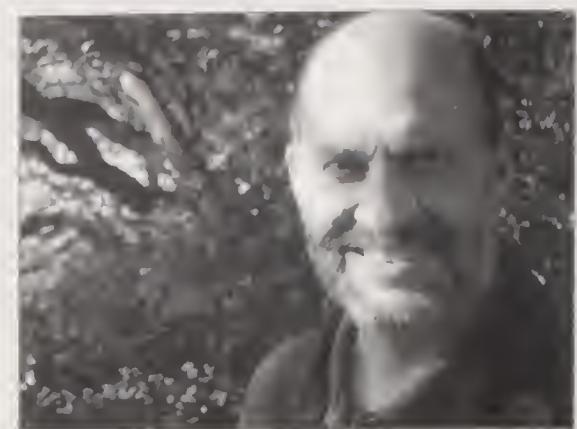
I knew before I started work as Executive Director on April 20th that GGA had a talented and committed board and staff. I was also aware of high-profile programs, such as Eco-Oakland and Eco-Richmond (for which we received a 2008 Governor's Award for Environmental and Economic Leadership), the protection of raptors at Altamont Pass, and our famous field trips, classes, and speakers' series.

But now that I am officially on board, I am even more impressed with the breadth and depth of Golden Gate Audubon's work to save birds, other wildlife, and habitat in the Bay Area. And after meeting many of our 1,700 volunteers who are out in the field every day, monitoring bird populations, restoring habitat, and educating the public, I am in awe of their commitment and dedication.

Every day I discover more activities that Golden Gate Audubon is leading or playing an active role in—from the North Richmond Shoreline to Bayview Hunter's Point; from the Presidio to Lake Merced; and from Eastshore State Park and the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge to Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park.

In the days and months ahead, I look forward to meeting and working with each of you. As you know, we face many challenges, especially in the current economy, and your help and support are vital to helping us carry on our work. We have a great staff, a hard-working board, and a clear mission. But we can't meet our goals without you! Please get involved today and help us make a difference for Bay Area birds and keep our wild places wild.

—Mark Welther



Eco-Oakland intern Steven Saefong scoops up trash from a marsh on Earth Day at Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline.

Linda Coffee



CONSERVATION CORNER

PLOVERS ONLINE

Matt Zlatunich and a team of Golden Gate Audubon partners and allies have developed a new website to provide information and updates about San Francisco's population of Western Snowy Plovers and activities affecting them. Please visit www.sfsnowy-plovers.org to learn more about our local Western Snowy Plovers, the 2008-2009 Snowy Plover monitoring report, and upcoming events, including beach cleanup days.

RESTORE SHARP PARK

Golden Gate Audubon continues to be involved in the effort to restore Sharp Park and protect the endangered San Francisco Garter Snake and the threatened California Red-Legged Frog. To get involved and read about updates, please visit www.restoresharppark.org.

OFFSHORE WIND IN SAN FRANCISCO?

At the request of the city of San Francisco, the Stanford Solar and Wind Energy Project recently released a report on the viability of offshore wind resource development in the San Francisco Bay Area. Areas studied included open water just east of the Farallon Islands and an area near the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. When Golden Gate Audubon raised concerns about potential impacts to birds from the floating turbines, city officials assured us that the feasibility report was just an initial step to determine whether further investigation and environmental review were worthwhile. A similar wind development project off the shore of Oahu, Hawaii, shut down before construction occurred because potential environmental and financial costs were too high. Golden Gate Audubon will continue to closely monitor all wind energy developments in the Bay Area.

ALAMEDA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE UPDATE

In April, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reaffirmed its request to the U.S. Navy for the land at Alameda Point and adjacent waters that have been home to a growing population of endangered California Least Terns for more than 30 years. Meanwhile, the Department of Veterans Affairs continues its proposal to build a large medical and memorial complex directly atop the proposed Refuge. Golden Gate Audubon members are needed to help convince Fish and Wildlife to remain committed to the refuge and to convince the V.A. that our veterans and the birds would be better served by developing new facilities at a more environmentally responsible location. To get involved, please contact Mike Lynes at mlynnes@goldengateaudubon.org.

EAST BAY TACKLES CLIMATE CHANGE

The cities of Berkeley and Oakland are quickly developing their Climate Action Plans to implement significant measures to conserve energy and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Both

cities are considering dramatic changes to city lighting, services and transportation. Golden Gate Audubon's East Bay Conservation Committee has been monitoring both plans and needs members to help provide input. Please contact Mike Lynes at mlynnes@goldengateaudubon.org to join our effort. Learn more at www.berkeleyclimateaction.org and www.sustainableoakland.org.

DISCOURAGING FIRE, ENCOURAGING NATIVES

Golden Gate Audubon has joined the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club and the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society to present a "green paper" that encourages the East Bay Regional Park District to protect native plants and habitats as it implements its fire management plans for the East Bay Hills. The hills are highly susceptible to dangerous fires because, in part, of the extensive urban-nature interface. We understand these dangers, but we know that the District could do a better job of managing the parks for native plants, which would reduce some wildfire risks. The Park District's environmental review documents are due to be released soon.

—Noreen Weeden and Mike Lynes

Return of the Terns

Saturday, June 20, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Please join us to celebrate the return of the endangered California Least Tern, nesting at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge after its 2,000 mile migration from Latin America. Reserve a one hour viewing trip to the Alameda Wildlife Refuge with a USFWS wildlife biologist. Registration required, please visit www.ebparks.org.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

Sunday, June 7, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.:

Pier 94 wetlands restoration work day

As part of our on-going efforts to restore wetlands along San Francisco's southern waterfront, we'll continue our work on weeding the beach and upland areas. Come join us! Refreshments provided.

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 4

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 3

Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.:

Lion Creek work day

Experience a new location and work under the redwoods for this one time opportunity. Help the city of Oakland by pulling invasive plants to improve the creek habitat of Lion Creek within the Leona Heights Park. For directions, please visit: www.oaklandnet.com/parks/rental_facilities/leona_directions.asp.

Saturday, July 11, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.:

Land's End work day

View the birds of Land's End, including Willow Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, and Orange-crowned Warbler, and improve their habitat on the coastal dunes and bluffs at Land's End. Meet near East Wash at the golf course access road west of the Palace of the Legion of Honor.

The easiest way to reach this area is to take Clement St. to 34th Ave., turn north on 34th to enter the Lincoln Park Golf Course, and follow this road up the hill to the Palace of the Legion of Honor. At the top of the hill 34th Ave intersects with El Camino del Mar. At this intersection there is an access road to the Golf Course.



Snowy Plover

Tom Grey

We will meet at this intersection and walk down through the Golf Course to get to East Wash. Please wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes; we will provide tools, water, and snacks. This event is led by the Parks Conservancy and co-sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR COASTAL CLEANUP ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2009!

MONITORING OPPORTUNITIES

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge is seeking TERNWATCH Volunteers

Monitor the California Least Tern nesting colony during the breeding season to detect predators or conditions that put the birds at risk. This work involves watching and recording activity at the Least Tern colony during the breeding season to report predator takes or risks as well as other problems that may cause breeding failure. Volunteers will be directly observing an endangered species, a tremendous privilege. A required two hour training class will be offered. The last training session will be held Thursday, June 25 at the Alameda U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office, 2275 Monarch Street, Alameda. Please RSVP at least one day before your chosen training session to: Susan Euing at 510.521.9624 or e-mail susan_euing@yahoo.com.

Annual Southern Waterfront Monitoring

Volunteers from Golden Gate Audubon will conduct monitoring of nesting and roosting birds along the Southern Waterfront, which consists of piers along San Francisco Bay from the Embarcadero to Heron's Head Park in San Francisco. Weekly monitoring starts in June and runs through August. We will be surveying to see if the Caspian Terns locate another site at which to nest in San Francisco. Volunteers with spotting scopes or binoculars are needed to conduct this survey. Contact Noreen Weeden at 415.252.1039 or Noreen@naturetrip.com for information.

—Jennifer Robinson Maddox

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

CONSERVATION CORNER

Jean Conner

Marian W Braumoeller, Diane Ross-Leech and Robert Leech, Ann L Winblad

Christa and Andrew Goldblatt, Evan Hoogs, Rebecca and Lee Jackrel, Suzanne Jones and Robert Elia, Marcia and Larry Kolb, Elizabeth Pulling

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MEMORIALS

Robert Ach, Diane Bahr, Ed and Mildred Bennett, Emma Brown and Sean Vickery, Sherida Bush and Timothy Platt, Dennis Creek and Linda Kroll, Sheila Mary Dickie, Susan Fandel, N. Fee, Carolyn Henel and Edward Kerley, Donald and Louise Heyneman, Erin Higbee, Christine Holmes, Glenn and Patti Itano, Ann and John Kadyk, Caroline Kim and Bruce De Benedictis, Helena Kirkwood, Carol Ann Kuelper, John and Sarah Lowry, Linda Lyons and Robert Goldsmith, Phillip Matticola, Nadine Mellor, Lyn Reese, Arthur Robinson, Ivan Samuels, Bill & Ginny Schultz, Irena and Stephen Schwaderer, Richard Sproul, Glen Tepke, Ken-ichi Ueda, Eleanor Vincent, Carol Viole, Ken Walters, Wendy Jeane Warrington and Kim Winthrop Hoffman, Victor and Brenda Wong, Dan Woodard, Eleanor Woodbury

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Marjorie and Bill Blackwell, in memory of John Hege

MEMORIAL GIFTS

N. Davis of London, England, for Sue Korbel

MEMORIAL GIFTS

IBM, PG&E

MEMORIALS

Bob Besso of Sunset Scavenger/Norcal Waste Systems, for buckets to be used in beach clean-up events and recycling bins for Earth Day

MEMORIALS

Patagonia, for Save the Quail.

Build a Nest Box for Your Backyard

Golden Gate Audubon and WildCare of Marin County are sponsoring a nest box building workshop on Saturday, June 27, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Come join us as we assemble nest boxes for Western Chickadees, Tree Swallows, Flycatchers, and Western Bluebirds. These cavity nesting birds are losing their prime nesting habitats in tree trunks and wooden fence posts as trees are cleared away before they decay, and modern fence posts are no longer made of wood. Fewer nesting sites mean more competition and that nest holes often are usurped by starlings and House Sparrows.

The GGA nest box building workshop will be held in the parking lot adjacent to Golden Gate Audubon, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, in Berkeley. We will provide all materials and hands-on instruction in how to assemble the boxes. No experience necessary! Participants may take their boxes home and place them in an appropriate site in their backyard, or they may donate an "autographed" box for placement in an East Bay Regional Park or another public

park. WildCare is working with East Bay Regional Park District to place nest boxes in Tilden Park.

The workshop fee is \$15 per box for Golden Gate Audubon members and \$20 for non-members. For an additional fee, Golden Gate Audubon will provide a 5-foot pole on which to mount the box. And we will send a knowledgeable WildCare volunteer to mount and install the box in your backyard. To install a nest box in your backyard, the yard and neighboring areas must be free of pesticides, herbicides, and outdoor cats. Homeowners also must agree to clean the box once a year, and monitoring nesting activity in springtime would be most helpful.

To register for the nest box building workshop, call Golden Gate Audubon at 510.843.2222 or email goldengateaudubon@ggas.org. The deadline for registering is Friday, June 19. For more information, call Marj Blackwell at 510.654.4456, or email: marjb@sbcglobal.net.

—Marjorie Blackwell



Western Bluebird

SNOWY PLOVERS from page 1

Since monitoring began during the 2004-2005 season, observers have documented Western Snowy Plovers at the Crissy Field WPA that were banded as far south as Pismo Beach in southern California and as far north as Humboldt County. Clearly, despite the area's small size and heavy use by humans and dogs, the WPA remains a significant site for over-wintering and migrating plovers.

The monitoring team also documented a significant increase in recreational use of the WPA. During the 20 survey hours in 2008-09, the team recorded nearly twice the number of pedestrians, joggers, and dog-walkers (with dogs both on and off leash) as during the 2007-08 survey. On- and off-leash dogs resulted in the highest disturbance rate of the plovers. Only 34 percent of dog walkers complied with the leash requirement law, a slight increase over last year.

With disturbances increasing, this threatened population of plovers has been steadily declining since the 2005-2006 season, when observers recorded 4.11 plovers per survey hour. That number declined to 3.69 plovers/survey hour in 2006-2007, to 2.87 plovers/survey hour in 2007-2008, and 2.15 plovers/survey hour in 2008-2009.

Our report provides several recommendations to better protect the snowy plover and the habitat integrity of the WPA. It encourages GGNRA to improve stewardship by following the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's *Western Snowy Plover Recovery Plan*. This may

require reducing physical access to the WPA, closing the WPA during annual events that traditionally bring heavy recreational use to the beach, and improving signage and education efforts about the importance of the WPA for the plovers. It also urges greater compliance with leash laws or an outright prohibition of pets in the WPA during the over-wintering season, both options encouraged by the recovery plan.

If the Western Snowy Plover population is going to recover, land managers and the public need to protect areas like the Crissy Field WPA. The Crissy Field plovers are a subset of the greater San Francisco population, with birds moving back and forth between this site and Ocean Beach, where the plover population is greater and faces the same management challenges. We will continue to monitor the WPA for plovers, other wildlife, and recreational uses and present our findings to land managers and the public, in the hope that we may all contribute to the recovery of Western Snowy Plovers.

We are very grateful to Golden Gate Audubon volunteer Matt Zlatunich, who organizes the Crissy Field WPA monitoring team and wrote the 2008-2009 annual report. We also thank our volunteer observers who contributed to the 2008-2009 monitoring project, including Devin Hallet, Richard, Horrigan, Terry Horrigan, Nancy Smith, Lynn Strandberg, Rachel Townsend, and Matt Zlatunich. And we appreciate the assistance of the staff and law enforcement personnel of the Golden Gate National Recreational Area.

—Mike Lynes



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, June 5, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

Meet at the parking lot at the north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-mile, two-hour-plus stroll through this lush riparian area. Mark your calendar for the first Friday of June, and then we will start again in September (Friday, September 4) on these popular Jewel Lake rambles.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sundays, June 7, July 5, August 2,
8 – 10:30 a.m.

Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241;
Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Botanical Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. This delightful section of Golden Gate Park has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is oriented toward beginning birders.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, June 19, July 17, August 21,
8 – 10 a.m.

Charles Hibbard; Lewis Ellingham; Brian Fitch; Margaret Goodale, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org, 415.554.9600 x16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, at end of Museum Way off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the city and bay as we circle Corona Heights, checking east canyon woodland and north forest for residents and migrants, as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and south cliff.

\$ Entrance fee
Biking trip

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Friday – Sunday, June 26 – 28

Dan and Joan Murphy, 415.564.0074;
preferred means of communicating is by e-mail (murphsf@comcast.net).

Join Dan and Joan on the annual GGA family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and many of the flycatchers, warblers, and finches that breed in the mountains.

Mono Lake and Eastern Sierra

Friday – Sunday, July 10 – 12

Emilie Strauss; Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936,
rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at Mono Lake County Park just north of Lee Vining at 8 a.m. on Friday, July 10. An overnight stay on July 9th is highly recommended. We will visit the west and south shores of Mono Lake, Lundy and Lee Vining Canyons, and Saddlebag Lake. The third day we will be at over 10,000 feet and will spend the day hiking with a significant climb. Please be in good physical condition. Trip will likely include Mono Lake, Lundy Canyon, and environs. Expect entrance fees at Yosemite National Park, Bodie State Park, and/or boat-taxi service across Saddlebag Lake, etc. You are responsible for your own transportation, food, and lodging arrangements; information can be found at www.leevingining.com. Call Rusty Scalf for reservations and information. Trip is limited to 15 people.



Barn Swallow

Robert Chilvers

Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden
Saturday, August 1

Saturday, August 1, 10 a.m. – noon (no June or July walk)

Angie Geiger and guest naturalists, 415.387.9160; www.sfnature.org.

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/bookstore at front gate of the San Francisco Botanical Garden, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families welcome. Children free but must be accompanied by an adult. Suggested adult donation \$10. No one turned away due to lack of funds. This popular monthly birding experience is jointly sponsored by the Botanical Garden, San Francisco Nature Education, and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

Tufted Puffins and the Farallon Islands Pelagic Trip

Sunday, August 2

Alan Hopkins, ash@sfo.com, 415.664.0983

We will depart from Emeryville at 7:30 a.m. for an eight-hour adventure to the Farallones and beyond. The Farallones are the most reliable place to view Tufted Puffins and other alcids. After visiting the Islands, weather permitting, we will continue west to the Continental Shelf to look for deep water species like Black-footed Albatross and Blue Whale.

Cost is \$125 GGA members, \$145 nonmembers. Last year's trip sold out early! To reserve your space, send a check to Shearwater Journeys, P.O. Box 190, Hollister CA 95024 (no refunds). Include the date of the trip, noting that you are a GGA member. Also include a phone number and e-mail address (if available) for each member of your party and a self-addressed stamped envelope. A small fuel surcharge may be required. Trip details are mailed upon payment. For more information contact trip leader Alan Hopkins

Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

August 15, 2009

Monday, August 3, 9 – 11 a.m.

Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001,

Bob@Wingbeats.org

We'll look for newly arriving shorebirds, perhaps a raptor or two, and passerines. This is an average tide day, but we may still spot a rail or two if we're lucky. Beginners welcome.

Directions: Take Hwy 880 toward the Oakland Airport. Exit at Hegenberger Road. Turn right onto

Bicycle Trips

Kathy Jarrett, leader

510.547.1233

Kathy_Jarrett@yahoo.com

Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress in layers. Rain cancels.

BART schedules: www.transitinfo.org

Quarry Lakes/Alameda Creek/Coyote Hills

Saturday, June 27, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Meet at 8:20 a.m. on the east side of the Fremont BART Station in the parking lot for this all-day trip; return to BART 3-4 p.m. We see birds from the time we step off the BART train, and they vary according to the season. There are riparian, marsh, and bayside habitats. The total distance is about 24-30 miles mostly on paved bike trails and some dirt. All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Reservations not necessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Alviso – Don Edwards S.F. Bay NWR

Saturday, July 25, 8 a.m. – noon

Meet at 9:10 a.m. at the trailhead; 8:30 at the Santa Clara/Great America Capitol Corridor Train Station. The ride from the station to Alviso County Park follows a trail and city streets.

Directions by car: Take I-880 south toward San Jose, then Calif Hwy 237 WEST, go 2 2 mi and take the North First Street exit. Turn right on N 1st St. In about 1 mi N 1st St becomes Taylor St. In one block turn right on Gold St, left on Elizabeth St, right on Hope St and continue to Alviso County Park and the trailhead parking for Don Edwards SF Bay NWR in Alviso.

By public transit: Capitol Corridor Train #723 from Richmond (BART connection) at 7:05, Berkeley at 7:12 Emeryville at 7:20 am, Jack London at 7:33 or Coliseum Station at 7:42 (BART connection). We will ride on trails and streets to the trailhead, and return on Train #734 from Santa Clara at 1:02 pm (next train #736 at 2:52). The Emeryville and Jack London stations are full service stations. You should arrive at the station well in advance to purchase your ticket and get on the platform; senior fares at a discount of 15% are available for those 62 and over. The other stations have ticket machines or you buy tickets on the train. Contact Kathy if you want to participate in a 10-ride ticket from Emeryville.

East Shore State Park

Saturday, August 15

Meet at 8:10 a.m. at the El Cerrito Del Norte BART Station or 8:30 at the end of S. 51st Street in Richmond. There is a spur from the S.F. Bay Trail to this point. We will bird along the Bay Trail from Richmond to Emeryville and end at Aquatic Park in Berkeley. Bring bicycle lock, sun screen, and liquids. Bring lunch or purchase on the trip at the Seabreeze Market. All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Reservations not necessary, but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

Directions by car: Take the Bayview exit from I-580 N and turn left to cross west over the freeway, go left on Seaport and immediately left on S. 51st Street, go to end and park on street. An entrance to a short spur to the SF Bay Trail starts here. If you are concerned about security you can park at Point Isabel and ride north on the trail about 0.75 mile to meet the group.

BART/Bicycle directions: Meet Kathy and Blair at the Del Norte BART station at 8:10 (train through MacArthur at 7:54) and ride to the trail. From BART take Ohlone Greenway Trail south to Potrero Ave, turn right toward the bay, cross San Pablo Ave and left onto S. 55th St immediately after crossing under I-80, then right onto Gately, first left onto Ells, right onto Bayview. Cross Carlson, then go over I-580, left onto Seaport and immediately left onto S. 51st St and proceed to the trail. It is also possible to go from the El Cerrito Plaza Station to the trailhead via Carlson. View BART schedules online at www.transitinfo.org. Bay Trail info online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov>.

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 8



SPEAKER SERIES

KAREN FREDRIKSEN, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m. Come early for refreshments at 7 p.m.

San Francisco: Thursday, June 18

Presentation to be announced, please check our website for an update: www.golden-gateaudubon.org/html/speakerclass/speakerseries.htm.

Butterflies in a Butterfly House

Rich Kelson

Berkeley: Thursday, July 16

Butterfly Habitat is a butterfly house located at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo. All butterflies displayed are tropical, bred in butterfly farms around the world. The pupae are shipped to Vallejo and hatched inside the display. Often visitors find a dead or dying butterfly, necessitating an explanation from staff that butterflies don't live very long. But how long do they live? Only a few days? Do they live longer in "the wild"? Why do they live to different ages? After years of observations, Rich Kelson has answers that might surprise you.

Kelson has been studying butterflies and other "bugs" since about age 6, when he collected wings found along neighborhood sidewalks. He has a degree in Entomology from U.C. Berkeley and did graduate work at U.C. Davis. In 1988, when the first butterfly house opened in the western U.S. (in Vallejo), Rich became involved with its operation and has now been there 21 years. He has traveled extensively in Central America. He coordinates the Mt. Diablo Butterfly Count and has compiled an annotated checklist for the Mt. Diablo Interpretive Association. Rich has participated in many endangered species surveys and also surveyed the butterflies of Snow Mountain and Yolla Bolly Wilderness areas.

Note: The audience is invited to bring butterfly photos for additional discussion.



Birds and Buddhism in the Land of the Thunder Dragon

Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna-Ridley

San Francisco: Thursday, August 20

In April 2008, the Ridleys enjoyed a three-week exploration of the mountain kingdom of Bhutan. Their presentation highlights the beautiful mountain habitats of this isolated Himalayan country and the exciting wildlife they were fortunate to observe and photograph. They will discuss and illustrate the historic importance of Buddhism in Bhutan for preservation of habitat and wildlife.

Allan Ridley, M.S., taught biology and ornithology at the Urban School of San Francisco. Helen McKenna-Ridley, M.S., taught biology at George Washington High School and was Principal of Raoul Wallenberg High School. Together they have traveled widely and have led birding and natural history trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, New Zealand, and Australia. On the first Sunday of each month they lead a bird walk through the San Francisco Botanical Garden in Golden Gate Park.

San Francisco: NEW LOCATION!! The San Francisco Speaker Series will be held at the First Unitarian Universalist Church and Center, 1187 Franklin Street at Geary, San Francisco. For more information, please visit: www.uusf.org/visitors_faq.html. Use the Map It! tool on the left for directions. Public Transit, lot parking for a fee, and street parking is available.

Berkeley: Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley. For directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.html.

FIELD TRIPS from page 7

Hegenberger and continue 0.7 mile across a small bridge to Pardee Drive and turn right. Continue to Swan Way and turn left. Shortly thereafter, turn right into the East Bay Regional Shoreline. Continue to the parking lot at the end of the road.

Abbott's Lagoons, Point Reyes

West Marin County

Friday, August 21, 9 a.m. – noon

Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001,
Bob@Wingbeats.org

In addition to seeing the normal gulls, terns, and pelicans, we've been very lucky on this trip in past years, finding a few unusual sandpipers, and often seeing Snowy Plovers. The trip can be a bit arduous, since we'll probably walk some distance in sand to the far corner of the lagoon, and it can be quite sunny, so dress accordingly and bring water.

Directions: From Hwy 101 in Marin County, take Lucas Valley Road west towards Nicasio. Bear right on Nicasio Valley Road, then turn left on Point Reyes – Petaluma Road toward Pt Reyes Station. Turn left at the Hwy 1 intersection, then right onto Sir Francis Drake Blvd, which will bend to the right. Continue past Inverness and take the right-hand road at the Y intersection (Pierce Point Road). The turnoff into the Abbott's Lagoon parking lot is on the left.

Snag Lake Backpack Trip

Lassen Volcanic National Park

Friday – Monday, August 28 – 31

Robin Pulich; David Rice, 510.527.7210,
drice2@comcast.net

Join David and Robin on this annual camping and birding trip. We will backpack three miles to Snag Lake and spend three nights in primitive camping by a stream near a large meadow. We should see flocks of mixed warblers and other songbirds, plus resident birds of the mountain, Bald Eagles, and migrating shorebirds. We will be above 6,000 feet. To avoid impact on fragile habitat, trip is limited to 12 people. Each participant is responsible for their own gear and food; some shared meals can be arranged. Contact leader to reserve a space.



CLASSES

Birds of the Sierra

There may still be space available in the Birds of the Sierra I and II classes—see *May Gull* for details and contact Bob Lewis (bob@wingbeats.org) for more info.



American Avocets

The following class is jointly sponsored by the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, San Francisco Native Plant Society, and Golden Gate Audubon. Class is held at the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. To register, call GGA at 510.843.2222

Wild Birds of San Francisco: An Introduction

<http://www.birdsby.org/education/fieldtrips/sanfrancisco.html>

Two Tuesday evenings, July 21 and 28, 7 – 9 p.m.

Three Saturday field trips, July 18, 25, and August 1 (First meeting at the main entrance to the Botanical Garden at 10 a.m., July 18.)

Join a fun and enthusiastic group in an introduction to many of the amazing birds that inhabit the San Francisco Bay Area in summer, and discover their local habitats. Presentations include colorful bird imagery, information on optics and field guides, identification techniques and more.

\$60 fee



Black-necked Stilt

EAST BAY CLASSES

The Romance of Birds

<http://www.birdsby.org/education/fieldtrips/eastbay.html>

Four Thursday evenings, Golden Gate Audubon offices, July 9 – 30, 7 – 9 p.m.

Four Sunday field trips, July 12 – August 2

This new class on bird behavior and physiology will focus on local nesting birds that are here in the summer. Presentations include colorful imagery and discussions of bonding, nesting, and parenting behaviors of waterfowl, waders, raptors, shorebirds, hummers, and songbirds. We'll also greet shorebirds returning from their northerly breeding grounds and have fun comparing birds in fresh juvinal plumages to adults in worn breeding plumages.

Note: One field trip to Frank's dump includes a hike of about one mile each way on a flat path. The trip will be in the afternoon.

\$80 fee; limited to 20 students

Golden Gate Audubon is sponsoring the following class through the Albany Adult School, 601 San Gabriel Avenue, Albany. Register online at <http://albany.k12.ca.us/adult/> or call 510.559.6580 for more information.

Birds and Butterflies: Easy Garden Enchantment

<http://www.birdsby.org/education/fieldtrips/easygarden.html>

Four Tuesday evenings, July 7 – 28, 7 – 9 p.m.

One Saturday field trip, August 1

Welcome birds, butterflies, and more. Learn year-around ecological gardening management to create wildlife habitat.

\$5 materials fee, payable to instructor.

The Library at Golden Gate Audubon is seeking donations of books and periodicals related to birds, ecology, and nature studies, especially related to the Bay Area and Northern California, as we expand our library's research capacity.

If you are interested in donating material to us, please contact Kevin E. Consey, Chief Operating Officer, 510.292.6274, or kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org.



OBSERVATIONS

BRUCE MAST

APR 1 – 30, 2009

The pulse of life quickened in April, bringing back most of the regular summer nesting birds, along with spectacular wildflower displays in the hills. Late month saw a surge in montane migrants passing through for destinations to the north. Shorebird movements also reached a crescendo.

LOONS TO DUCKS

The continuing Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) at Miller Landing on Tomales Bay (MRN) was not reported again after the 13th (mob). Sea watches from the SM coast reported high counts for Black-footed Albatross (1) on the 12th; Northern Fulmar (41) on the 1st; Pink-footed Shearwater (59) on the 27th; Sooty Shearwater (4,120) on the 27th; and Manx Shearwater (1) on the 4th (RT, DS, ME and ED).

A half-dozen Cattle Egrets flew over Pier 5 along the Embarcadero, SF, on Apr. 14 (PS), and a lone bird frequented Shorebird Park in Redwood Shores, SM, Apr. 14-24 (TG; KS, PJM). A flyover flock of 15 White-faced Ibis brightened the Apr. 24 commute near the Hwy. 92 toll plaza at Hayward RS, ALA (BR). A female Long-tailed Duck explored the waters off the 2nd Street Pier in Benicia, SOL, on Apr. 4-5 (RM).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

On the 20th, migrant Swainson's Hawks cruised over Twin Peaks, SF (BF) and PRNS Lighthouse, MRN (DaW, LH, oob). A Rough-legged Hawk held out through the 5th at Byron Hot Springs Rd., CC (DeW, LH). On the 30th, a Prairie Falcon zipped through Mitchell Cyn., Mt. Diablo SP, CC (HH, oob). At Schollenberger Park in Petaluma, SON, 3 Pacific Golden-Plovers probed the mudflats with their Black-bellied friends through the 12th (BM, TH).

Solitary Sandpipers turned up on the 19th at Sierra Rd., SCL (Bob Hirt, oob) and the following day at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN (JCl, AK). Red-necked Phalaropes started moving through the region on the 19th, with 100s present at Hayward RS,



Chestnut-sided Warbler

foray to Lafayette Park, SF, where a Red-tailed Hawk promptly sent it packing (RB).

Gray and Dusky Flycatchers started showing up on the 20th at Mt. Davidson, SF (AW, BF) and PRNS Fishdocks, MRN (RS). A Cassin's Kingbird lingered Apr. 16-17 at Coyote Pt., SM (RT; LB, KO, TG). Scattered Purple Martins took to the skies over Pine Flat Rd., east of Healdsburg, SON, on the 12th (BM, TH). On the 26th, 2 Bank Swallows checked out their historic nesting cliffs at Ano Nuevo SR, SM (GH). A sole Mountain Bluebird wandered to Chimney Rock, PRNS, MRN, on the 2nd (RS, oob). A Brown Thrasher made the highlight reel for the 3rd county in 4 months, this time in a backyard in Bodega Bay, SON, where it settled in Mar. 31-Apr. 17 (NC, fide BBu; SH).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Warbler sightings this month include 4 Palm and 2 Black-and-white Warblers. Yellow-breasted Chats started showing up in the S. Bay by the 24th. On the 9th, a Rose-Breasted Grosbeak joined its Black-headed cousin at Strawberry Hill, GGP, SF (AnH). A Yellow-headed Blackbird joined up with a flock of Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds at Grant CP, SCL, on the 19th (ST). The following week, Yellow-headeds flew solo over Coyote Pt. Marina, SM (RT) and Disk Drive in Alviso, SCL (AC, oob). SF recorded Lawrence's Goldfinch sightings on the 19th in the Presidio (AK, RC, oob) and on the 27th over Upper Cole Valley (PS).

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Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs, the author apologizes for any errors or omissions. Special thanks to Rod Thornton for helping compile Observations data.

Abbreviations for Observers: AC, Anne Creevy, Ach, Alice Holmes, AK, Andy Kleinhesselink, AnH, Alan Hopkins, AW, Adam Winer, BBo, Bill Bousman, BBu, Betty Burridge, BF, Brian Fitch, BM, Bruce Mast, BR, Bob Richmond, DaW, David Wimpfheimer; DeW, Denise Wight, DH, Derek Heins, DM, Dominik Mosur, DS, Dan Singer; ED, Ed Debelleveue, GH, Garth Harwood; HH, Hugh Harvey, JCh, Jim Chiropulos, JCl, Josiah Clark, JR, Jennifer Rycenga, KO, Kris Olson, KS, Ken Schneider, LB, Leonie Batkin, LH, Lisa Hug; ME, Mark Eaton, NC, Nancy Conzett, PJM, Peter J. Metropulos, PS, Paul Saraceni, RB, Richard Bradus, RC, Richard Clark; RM, Roger Muskat, RS, Rich Stallcup, RT, Ron Thorn, SH, Steve Huckabone, ST, Steve Tracy, TG, Tom Goodier, TH, Tim Howe

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda, CC, Contra Costa, CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; CP, County Park; Cr, Creek, Cyn, Canyon, EEC, Environmental Education Center, FOS, first of season; GGP, Golden Gate Park, L, Lake, MRN, Marin; Mt, Mount, N, North, NAP, Napa, NWR, National Wildlife Refuge, OSP, Open Space Preserve, PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt, Point, Rd, Road, Res., Reservoir, RP, Regional Park, RS, Regional Shoreline; S, South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco, SFBO, SF Bay Bird Observatory; SM, San Mateo, SOL, Solano, SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park, SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant



Lee Farrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow



Long-billed Curlew



Cuckoo Wren

Ballot for Election of Golden Gate Audubon Directors

Ballots received by the June 19, 2009, ballot election deadline will be counted in accordance with the choice specified for each candidate.

DIRECTOR NOMINEE	TERM ENDING	YES	NO
Whitney Dotson	2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mark Mushkat	2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diane Ross-Leech	2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rich Walkling	2012	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

MEMBER NAME

MEMBER SIGNATURE



2009 Board Election—Make Your Vote Count

The 2009 election for Golden Gate Audubon members to select directors of the GGA Board of Directors will take place by written ballot. The Board's Development Committee, with the approval of the Board, has nominated four candidates listed below. A total of 35 ballots is needed to meet the quorum requirement of the GGA bylaws.

Members in good standing are asked to vote by completing and signing the ballot form below and returning it to the Golden Gate Audubon office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94702, on or before June 19, 2009.

Deadline for receipt of ballots is June 19, 2009.

WHITNEY DOTSON

Whitney Dotson has been a designated director of Golden Gate Audubon since November 2007. He is also a member of the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors and founder of the North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance. He received Golden Gate Audubon's Elsie Roemer Conservation Award in 2007.

MARK MUSHKAT

Mark Mushkat is Chair of Golden Gate Audubon's Finance

Committee, acting Chair of the Development Committee and an alternate member of the Executive Committee. He has been a designated director since July 2008 and most recently served on the GGA Executive Director Search Committee. Mark is a financial investment advisor and an avid birder.

DIANE ROSS-LEECH

Diane Ross-Leech is President of the Golden Gate Audubon Board of Directors, Chair of both the Executive and Board Development Committees, and a member of the Finance Committee. She has served on the Board as a designated director since April 2007 and most recently chaired the GGA Executive Director Search Committee. Diane is Director of Environmental Stewardship at PG&E in San Francisco.

RICH WALKLING

Rich Walkling is Chair of Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer and Member Committee and has served on the Board as a designated director since July 2008. He served on the 2008 search committee, which selected Mike Lynes as Conservation Director. Rich is a restoration planner and the business manager of Restoration Design Group, an environmental restoration and landscape firm that specializes in creek restoration.

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OIL SPILL SURVEYS from cover

official wildlife rescue effort, including 766 Surf Scoters, 562 Western or Clark's Grebes, 288 Eared or Horned Grebes, 288 Common Murres, 248 cormorants, 199 gulls, and 170 Greater Scaup. Note that these numbers include *only* birds captured by wildlife rescue and rehabilitation teams and not birds merely observed.

While GGA's data and the wildlife rescue collection numbers are not directly comparable, they offer some interesting contrasts. For example, surf scoters comprised approximately 26% of the birds collected by wildlife rescue teams but only 14% of those observed by our survey teams. Notably, rescue teams collected at least 288 common murres, approximately 10% of all birds collected, but our surveyors recorded only one (approximately 0.04% of our total). This is a good example of potential bias in our survey protocol, since the Common Murre is a pelagic bird and most of our surveys were conducted within the confines of the Bay.

The LSA report is careful to point out that GGA's data do not reflect the full extent of impacts to birds resulting from the spill, and that the official data from wildlife rescue and collection probably provides for more realistic estimates. Our surveyors covered a limited geographic area, including Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties, and the *Cosco Busan*'s oil spread much further. Moreover, limitations in our data prevented analysis and comparison to other survey efforts conducted in the Bay Area.

Still, LSA's analysis of the geographic scope of our observations provides some interesting findings. In Alameda County, where we performed 104 surveys, we observed 657 oiled birds. In San Francisco County, where the spill occurred, we performed 45 surveys

(including several on the Pacific Ocean coastline) and observed 662 oiled birds. In Contra Costa County, we performed 49 surveys and observed 976 oiled birds, a total of 43% of all oiled birds recorded in our census. The majority of dead birds were recorded in Alameda County, but only 26% of oiled birds were observed there.

The LSA report also suggests several improvements for GGA's future oil spill survey efforts, including standardizing data collection forms and protocols with other response surveyors in the Bay Area, better training surveyors and defining our survey areas, and better coordinating our surveys with other local groups.

With support from the San Francisco Foundation, GGA has improved its readiness for future spills. We have drafted a written oil spill response protocol to organize our response efforts and we have improved our coordination with Audubon California and other local groups. Most importantly, we will participate in the Oiled Wildlife Care Network and provide training to staff and volunteers to assist with rescue, survey, and rehabilitation efforts in future spills.

Golden Gate Audubon would not have been able to respond to the *Cosco Busan* spill without our committed volunteer survey teams and all of our members who supported our efforts. We are also extremely grateful to the San Francisco Foundation, which provided an emergency grant to help fund our response efforts. Finally, we thank Leslie Allen, Greg Gallagher, and Steve Granholm, and everyone at LSA, who organized and analyzed our survey data to produce the report.

For more information, please contact me at mlynes@goldengateaudubon.org.

—Mike Lynes